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ABSTRACT

This document reports the executive summary of findings and recommendations of a study of the Education Professions Development Act (EPDA) Training Programs for higher education personnel. Findings indicate (1) the need for substantial training in American higher education, (2) the training demand is pervasive, (3) the demand for training is fairly uniform in the sampled population of higher education professionals, (4) some kinds of training, including some nontraditional kinds, are more in demand than others, (5) professionals in different roles need different kinds of training, (6) college presidents report practically no overstaffing in any professional category, (7) presidents perceive that money is the limiting factor in staffing, (8) presidents prefer to fill needs by hiring, rather than by reassigning or retraining, (9) EPDA-funded fellowship programs are influencing the career decisions of their participants, and (10) avoidable data on EPDA programs are inadequate for the evaluation. Recommendations suggest: (1) that EPDA continue to support institute programs to provide training, (2) that the Office of Education consider fellowship aid upon actual subsequent employment in relevant roles in higher education, (3) that EPDA program offices gather and process evaluative data in a more effective and economical manner than in the past, and (4) that the Office of Education expand its existing program of manpower-projection modeling. (MJM)

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A Study of the Education Professions Development Act Training Programs for Higher Education Personnel

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- FINAL REPORT -

February 25, 1973

Policy conclusions follow from several dimensions of the findings of Abt Associates' Study of the Education Professions Development Act, Part V-E, Training Programs for Higher Education Personnel. In summary, these are the principal findings:

1. A representative sample of higher education personnel declare a variety of kinds of training to be "necessary" and "important" for themselves and their colleagues, indicating that substantial training need and demand exist in American higher education. Our case studies of colleges in transition document the existence of training needs in these atypical institutions, as well.

2. The training demand is pervasive: public and private colleges, two-year and four-year colleges, colleges in turmoil and relatively stable colleges, financially troubled colleges and well-to-do colleges all evidence a rather consistent, uniform level of demand.

3. The demand for training is fairly uniform in the sampled population of higher education professionals. Administrators, counselors, and faculty leaders agree among themselves by and large, as to the need for training and the kinds of training that the various staff groups require.

4. Some kinds of training, including some non-traditional kinds, are more in demand than others: the general category of training in human relations skills is in the highest demand overall, followed at some distance by training in handling current special problems in higher education, training in managerial skills, further academic studies, and training in information management skills.

5. Professionals in different roles need different kinds of training, as both they and their colleagues see it. Not surprisingly, presidents, deans, and department chairmen are perceived as needing managerial and human relations training, in keeping with the scope and visibility of their responsibilities. Tenured and non-tenured faculty, including department chairmen, on the other hand, were seen to require

further academic studies.

6. College presidents report practically no overstaffing in any professional category. On the contrary, they perceive a need for more personnel across the board, especially for admissions and recruiting for job and personal counseling, and for institutional planning, fund-raising, research and development. Two-year and public colleges also report a substantial need for remedial instructional personnel.

7. Presidents perceive that money is the limiting factor on staffing. They feel that neither the supply of trained people nor the readiness of their institutions currently constrains hiring: if funds were available to create needed job slots, presidents feel they could find qualified people and assimilate them into existing college structures.

8. Presidents prefer to fill needs by hiring, rather than by reassigning or retraining existing staff for undermanned functions.

9. EPDA-funded fellowship programs are influencing the career decisions of their participants, according to a sizable fraction of the respondents to our Fellows Survey. A number of Fellows are not entering higher education professions, however, and EPDA funds are therefore serving in part to subsidize training for other occupations.

10. Available data on the EPDA programs are inadequate for their evaluation, either individually or comparatively, as our efforts to organize these data reveal.

These findings confirm, by and large, what thoughtful viewers of the post-secondary education scene have long suspected on less generalizable grounds. The study's most suprising revelation is probably the uniform level of demand for training as expressed by college leaders occupying a variety of roles in a variety of kinds of undergraduate institutions. In supporting training for professional personnel for higher education, the Government is clearly not merely responding to the parochial interests of a narrow special-interest group. It is rather filling a need on which a broad consensus is evident among those

most directly concerned.

Uniform distribution of demand for training does not imply, of course, that training should be distributed uniformly. Developing colleges, colleges which serve disadvantaged populations, and colleges whose emphases in other ways especially serve the public interest, might reasonably be deemed to have the most urgent need. Colleges which can pay for training, furthermore, should probably do so, if the alternative is to divert training funds from them to colleges which cannot afford the training their staffs need.

Professionals in differing roles require differing kinds of training. Only human relations skills training, a category heavily emphasized in the current EPDA V-E institute programs, emerges with substantial demand in all recipient categories. Our respondents targeted their demand for other types of training much more specifically.

Some of the areas of personnel and training need that our survey reveals correspond to none of the traditional degree programs that higher education offers: few if any degree programs now exist in admissions and recruiting, or in institutional development and fund-raising. People of varying backgrounds traditionally assume these roles after accumulating experience in related roles: our findings suggest that this sort of on-the-job training may not provide the needed skills in human relations and management.

Federal funding has been known to create new degree programs: witness the numerous departments of educational research founded when money for research training became available through ESEA. It is not obvious that EPDA should aim to generate new higher-education disciplines in this manner. People are less likely to aspire to a life-long career in admissions than in research. In-service, short-term institutes would seem to offer a more flexible way to help college professionals gain the skills they need.

The manpower implications of our findings require further research and study. One might be tempted, for example, to conclude from our findings that training should be directed exclusively toward up-

grading the skills of people already employed in higher education professions. College presidents indicate, after all, that they have no trouble finding qualified people to hire, if only they can afford to do so. This being the case, there is apparently already a pool of available trained people, and one might reasonably hesitate to support training whose immediate result would be to increase unemployment. One crucial question remains, however: how long would the supply last if college hiring budgets increased? Surveys alone cannot answer this kind of question. To answer it, we would have to combine survey results with some explicit mathematical assumptions about the dynamic relationships among personnel category levels and rates of hiring, attrition, enrollment, graduation, salary increase and other such factors. In the early stages of this Study, we undertook some exploratory investigations which established the feasibility of a mathematical modeling effort, whose product would allow policy makers to examine the conditions under which various possible kinds of equilibrium might exist in the system of which professional training is a part. Until such a model is availiable, planners will have to balance preservice training off against in-service training on the basis of little more than guesswork.

In summary, we recommend as follows:

1. That EPDA continue to support institute programs designed to provide training:

   a. in human relations skills for all categories of higher professionals.

   b. in managerial skills for administrative personnel, and

   c. in handling current special problems for college presidents, deans, and department chairmen.

More specifically, college presidents and their institutional development staffs should be trained in the mobilization of financial and

human resources: how to raise and allocate funds, how to recruit people for non-traditional roles, and how to organize the training that such recruiting necessitates.

2. To the extent that real need is projected for additonal manpower in the higher education system, that the Office of Education consider conditioning fellowship aid upon actual subsequent employment in relevant roles in higher education. Some sort of loan-fellowship arrangement might accomplishthis goal, if loans were forgiven over the first few years of a higher education career.

3. That the EPDA program offices gather and process evaluative data in a more effective and economical manner than in the past. Volume III of this report contains a number of specific recommendations in this regard.

4. That the Office of Education expand its existing program of manpower-projection modelling to include professional manpower in the post-secondary education sector, so as to have an assumption-stated basis for striking a balance between fellowship and institute support. The sketches of such a model that were developed under this contract provide some potentially useful initial considerations.